

## EFFORTS TO BUILD EMPLOYEE WORK ATTACHMENT THROUGH AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND WORK DISCIPLINE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of mediation of affective commitment, and work discipline on the effect of job stress on employee work attachment. This research was conducted at the Sugar Factory X in East Java, involving 158 employees. Data were collected using a questionnaire and the results were analyzed using PLS software. The results of this study indicate that job stress does not have a significant effect on work attachment, but affective commitment and work discipline as full mediation on the effect of job stress on work attachment. In testing direct effects on other variables show that, job stress directly influences work discipline and affective commitment, while work discipline and affective commitment directly affect work attachment. This study places affective commitment, and work discipline as a variable for the pillar on the effect of job stress on employee work attachment. The important findings of this study are affective commitment and work discipline act as full mediation variables. That job stress is unable to play a role in efforts to improve employee work attachment unless there is a role in mediation from affective commitment variables and work discipline. The results strengthen the social exchange theory.

**Keywords:** job stress, affective commitment, work discipline, employee work attachment

### INTRODUCTION

Human resources are one of the most important resources possessed by an organization. Directly proportional to this statement, humans are also the most complicated resources owned by the company. This is because humans have the unique characteristics that each individual has. For this reason, companies need to pay attention to the needs of their employees for the creation of employee attachment or employee engagement. PT Perkebunan Nusantara X Sugar Factory X is a company that pays high attention to the work engagement of its employees. PT Perkebunan Nusantara X Sugar Factory X is a state-owned company engaged in

the plantation sector, especially regarding sugar production. Sugar is one of the daily staples for the community. The increasing demand for sugar requires companies to have qualified human resources to meet the high market demand.

Basically, employee engagement is a sense of emotional attachment to work and organization, motivated and able to give their best to help the success of a series of benefits for organizations and individuals (Lewiuci, 2016). Employee engagement is marked by the enthusiasm, dedication, and appreciation that employees have in carrying out their work (Schaufeli & Bakker (2004). Many factors can affect the level of work engagement of employees, one of which is job stress. In the work and opera-

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tional activities of the company, employees must be able to work under pressure which is experienced by many employees in various companies. On the other hand, if stress is too high, employee performance will decrease because stress interferes with work execution. Empirical studies show that there is an effect of job stress on employee engagement, such as research by Garrosa et al., (2011), Karatepe et al. (2014), and Li et al. (2017) which shows that there is a significant influence between job stress on work engagement. But on the other hand, research conducted by Tagoe and Amponsah Tawiah (2019) shows that job stress has no significant impact on work engagement in the banking sector in Ghana. Research results by Karatepe et al. (2018) also shows that not all stress indicators have an influence on engagement. The indicator of job stress, namely Challenge stress, has no significant effect on engagement.

The difference in the results of this study allows other variables to support the effect of job stress on work engagement. Research by Ackfeldt and Malhotra (2012), Brunetto et al. (2017), and Solli Sæther (2011) shows that there is a significant relationship between job stress and affective commitment. Supporting this is the result of research by Einwiller, Ruppel, and Stranzl (2021), van Gelderen and Bik (2016), Ibrahim and Falasi (2014), and Kaur, Malhotra, and Sharma (2020) show that affective commitment also has a significant influence on work engagement. Affective commitment is an indicator of organizational commitment.

In addition to affective commitment, work discipline can also play a role in mediating the effect of job stress on work engagement, this is shown by the results of research by Hanan (2020) which shows that job stress has a signifi-

cant negative effect on work discipline. Work discipline is an attitude of willingness and readiness of a person to obey and comply with the norms of regulations that apply around him. High employee discipline will accelerate the achievement of company goals, while declining discipline will become a barrier and slow down the achievement of company goals (Singodimedjo, 2002). Based on the description of the background above, it is necessary to conduct research related to Efforts to Build Employee Engagement. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the mediating role of affective commitment and work discipline on the effect of job stress on employee engagement.

## Literature Review

### *Job Stress*

Stress is an addictive response, mediated by individual debates and/or psychological processes, which is a consequence of any activity (environment), situation, or external event that places excessive psychological or physical demands on a person. People who experience stress become nervous and feel worried, so they often become angry, aggressive, unable to relax, or show an uncooperative attitude (Hasibuan, 2017). The cause of stress is anything that causes this response. Factors that cause stress can create certain conditions in which a person can become depressed or suffer from physical and non-physical pain. Almost any working condition can be stressful, depending on how the employee responds to it. According to Robbins and Judge (2008) there are three main sources that can cause stress, including: Environmental factors; Organizational Factors; and Individual Factors.

The influence of employee job stress can have positive and negative impacts on the com-

pany. The beneficial positive impact is expected to spur employees to be able to complete the job as well as possible. The reaction to stress can be a psychological or physical reaction. Usually, employees who are stressed will show changes in behavior. According to Handoko (2008) the impact of job stress, namely: work performance will decrease, because stress interferes with work execution; Employees are unable to make decisions; Irregular employee behavior; Employees become sick and hopeless; Employees will leave (turnover) or run away from work. Job stress does not always have a negative impact on employees and companies. This depends on the psychological and social conditions possessed by employees, so that the reactions given to stressful conditions can be different. Job stress that has a positive impact on companies, among others: Having high work motivation; Triggers to work hard; Have a target to achieve stronger.

### *Employee Engagement*

The first researcher that put forward the concept of employee engagement was Kahn (1990). According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement is a form of employee mastery of their own work, where they will bind themselves to their work, then work and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Employees who are engaged with the organization will make positive feedback to themselves in terms of appreciation and thoughts. Engaged employees also not only show their enthusiasm at work but also show enthusiasm outside of their work such as during sports, in carrying out their hobbies and volunteering at work (Bakker & Demeurouti, 2008). Judge and Robbins (2017) defines work engagement as a form of involvement, satisfaction and individual

enthusiasm with the work performed. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) disclose the factors that influence employee engagement, including: job resources; Job demands; personal resources. A strong theory as a basis for employee engagement used in this study is the Social Exchange theory. The basic principle of this theory is that relationships evolve over time into mutual trust, willingness, and commitment between the interacting parties. Social Exchange theory emphasizes that employees feel obligated to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors, when they have positive experiences at work (Noermijati et al., 2021).

### *Affective Commitment*

Affective commitment is part of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is a situation where an employee sided with a particular organization and its goals and desire to maintain membership in the organization (Judge and Robbins, 2017). Further according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2014) organizational commitment reflects the degree to which a person recognizes an organization and is committed to its goals. Meanwhile, affective commitment describes the emotional attachment of employees, identification, and involvement of employees in the organization and in achieving its goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment refers to employees' psychological attachment to their organization because of their identification with the goals and values of the organization. Affective commitment is formed based on individual comfort in the organization.

### *Work Discipline*

Having work discipline means that someone must enforce all the rules in the company.

This is necessary because it will affect the tasks assigned to that person. According to Rivai (2009) states that work discipline is a tool used by managers to communicate with employees so that they are willing to change their behavior as well as an effort to increase awareness and willingness to comply with all company regulations.

### Research Hypothesis

Job stress is a condition of tension that affects one's thinking processes, emotions and conditions, the result of excessive stress can threaten one's ability to deal with the environment and will ultimately interfere with the implementation of one's duties (Handoko, 2008). In the work and operational activities of the company, employees must be able to work under pressure which is experienced by many employees in various companies. On the other hand, if stress is too high, employee performance will decrease because stress interferes with work execution. Research by Garrosa et al., (2011) shows that role stress has a significant negative effect on nursing engagement as measured by indicators of dedication, vigor and absorption. One of the results of testing the hypothesis in research conducted by Karatepe et al. (2018) shows that hindrance stress, one of the indicators of job stress, has a significant effect on reducing engagement levels. Karatepe et al. (2014) conducted research showing that challenge stressors, as manifested by workload and job responsibilities, are positively related to job involvement. Supporting the matter, research by Li et al. (2017) show the result that job stress has a significant effect on job engagement. Meanwhile, in the research conducted by Tagoe and Amponsah Tawiah (2019) showed that job stress did not have a significant impact

on work engagement in the Ghanaian banking sector. Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H1 = Job stress has a significant negative effect on work engagement**

Job stress directly has a significant effect on affective commitment. This is evidenced by the results of research from Ackfeldt and Malhotra (2012) which shows that stress as measured by the Role ambiguity and Role conflict indicators has a significant negative effect on affective commitment. Aghdasi, Kiâmanesh, and Ebrahim (2011) conducting research with the results of the research showing that occupational stress has a significant negative direct effect on organizational commitment. Research conducted by Brunetto et al. (2017), showed that high stress was associated with low affective commitment. On the other hand, research results from Chênevert et al. (2013) shows that one of the indicators of job stress, namely role ambiguity, has a significant negative effect on affective organizational commitment. Research conducted by Garg and Dhar (2014) shows the result that job stress has a significant negative effect on organizational commitment. Meanwhile, in the research conducted by Solli Sæther (2011) shows that role ambiguity, one of the indicators of job stress, has a significant negative effect on affective commitment. Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H2 = Job stress has a significant negative effect on affective commitment**

Research by Hanan (2020) which aims to identify and analyze the effect of job stress on work discipline, job stress on employee perfor-

mance, work discipline on employee performance and work discipline that mediates job stress on employee performance. One of the results of this study indicates that job stress has a significant positive effect on work discipline. Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H3 = Job stress has a significant negative effect on work discipline**

Empirically, there have been many research results which prove that affective commitment has a significant effect on work engagement. One of the results of research that has been conducted by Einwiller, Ruppel, and Stranzl (2021), the results show that affective commitment shows a significant effect on employee engagement. Research by van Gelderen and Bik (2016), shows that affective commitment has a significant positive effect on work engagement. Supporting the matter, Ibrahim and Falasi (2014) conducted research with the result that affective commitment has a significant positive effect on employee engagement. Research by Kaur, Malhotra, and Sharma (2020) shows that affective commitment has a significant effect on employee engagement. Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H4 = Affective commitment has a significant positive effect on work engagement**

Work discipline is an attitude of willingness and readiness of a person to obey and comply with the norms of regulations that apply around him. High employee discipline will accelerate the achievement of company goals, while declining discipline will become a barrier and slow down the achievement of company goals (Singodimedjo, 2002). Based on the theo-

retical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H5 = Work discipline has a significant positive effect on work engagement**

Organizational commitment was found to be strongly correlated with positive employee behavior (Sanders, Dorenbosch, & De Reuver, 2008). Meyer and Allen (1997) has identified three dimensions of commitment namely affective, continuance, and normative. Meyer et al. (2002) argues that affective commitment has “strongest and most favorable correlation”. Affective commitment is defined as “emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement of employees in the organization”. Employees who show high affective commitment tend to align their own interests and goals with those of the organization (Bell, & Mengüç, 2002). Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

**H6 = Affective commitment mediates the effect of job stress on work engagement**

Research results by Hanan (2020) which shows that job stress can have a significant negative effect on work discipline. Work discipline is an attitude of willingness and willingness of a person to comply with and comply with the norms of regulations that apply around him. Good employee discipline will accelerate the company's goals, while declining discipline will become a barrier and slow down the achievement of company goals (Singodimedjo, 2002). Based on the theoretical study and the results of the research, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows (Figure 1):

**H7 = Work discipline mediates the influence of job stress on work engagement**

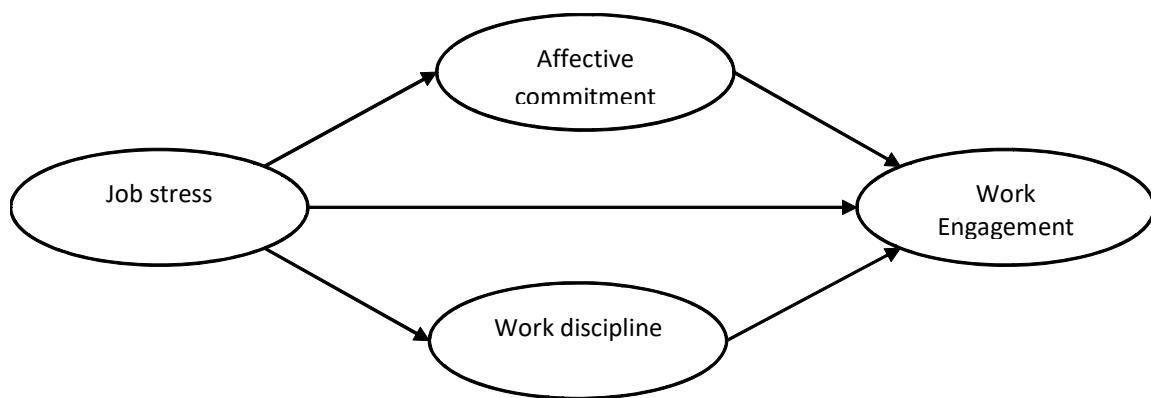


Figure 1 Research Concept Framework

## METHOD

This research was conducted on employees of Sugar Factory X. The research population is permanent employees at Sugar Factory X with a total of 158 employees. Furthermore, all members of the population are used as research samples, so this study uses a saturated sample. Therefore, it uses the census method in determining the sample. Methods of data collection using a questionnaire. Respondents' answers were measured by 5 Likert scale. Type of research is explanatory research. The research instrument test used validity and reliability tests, data processing methods used PLS (Partial Least Square) statistical techniques and WarpPLS software. This research also uses inferential statistical analysis method. Inferential statistical analysis is used to test hypotheses and produce a model that is feasible (fit). This research used data analysis method with PLS (Partial Least Square) statistical technique. Model evaluation in PLS analysis is carried out in 2 (two) ways, namely the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

This study adapted measurements from previous research studies and adapted them to suit the context of this research. The measurement of the job stress variable in this research

refers to Robbins and Judge (2008), namely among others: Environmental Factors; Organizational Factors; and Individual Factors. The indicator for measuring employee engagement variables in this research uses the indicators put forward by Schaufeli et al. (2002), namely: Vigor; Dedication; and Absorption. Affective commitment in this study is measured using 2 items that refer to the opinions of Meyer and Allen (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2014). These indicators include: part of the organization and involvement in the organization. Meanwhile, the indicators for measuring work discipline variables in this study used the indicators put forward by Singodimedjo (2002), namely: Obey the rules of time; Comply with company regulations; Obey the rules of conduct in work; Obey other regulations in the company and the rules regarding what is allowed and what is not allowed to be done by employees in the company.

## RESULT

From the results of distributing questionnaires to the permanent employees of Sugar Factory X with a total of 158 respondents, it can be obtained an overview of the characteris-

Table 1 Composite Reliability, Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ), Average Variance

Variable	Composite Reliability	R Square	Average Variance
Job stress (X1),	0.927	-	0.681
Employee Engagement (Y1),	0.910	0.363	0.480
Affective Commitment (Z1)	0.929	0.224	0.688
Work Discipline (Z2)	0.929	0.120	0.725

tics of the respondents, it is known that 99.36% of the respondents are male, 84,81% respondents have the last level of High School education (SMA). 44.30% of respondents aged between 36–45 years. 35.44% of respondents have a working period between 11–15 years.

Table 1 indicates that the scale, magnitude, and statistical fit are acceptable. Average variance extracted (AVE) values for all latent variables meet predetermined criteria. Composite reliability (CR) values were 0.927; 0.910; 0.929; and 0.929 (above 0.80). It can be concluded that all constructs are reliable, both according to composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha.

Goodness of Fit (GoF) in this study was assessed by the following equation:  $\sqrt{AVE} \times R^2$  A.Com = GoF =  $\sqrt{(AVE \times R^2)}$  =  $\sqrt{(0.643 \times 0.242)}$  = 0,394 shows that the model has great predictive relevance value for Employee Engagement explained by Job Stress, Affective Commitment, Work Discipline.

Table 2 displays the results of the structural estimation of the proposed model, as well as the direct and indirect effects of the variables tested. The hypothesis is accepted if it meets the criteria for a p-value of less than 0.05, but if the p-value is greater than 0.05 then  $H_0$  is rejected or not significant. The table

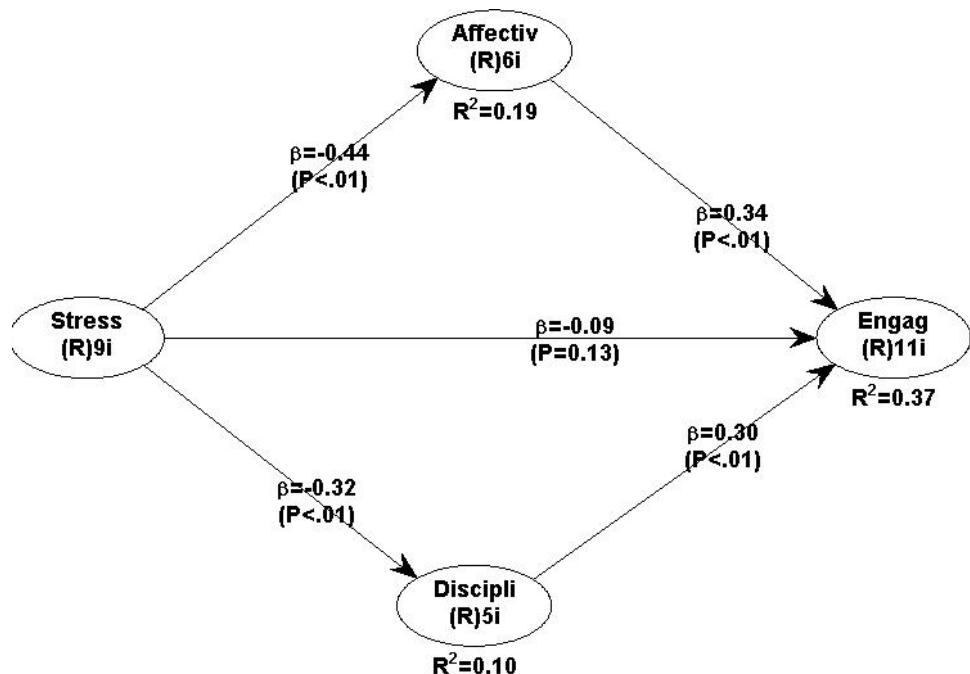


Figure 2 Structural Model Path Diagram in PLS (Direct Effect)

Table 2 The Summary of Relationship Assessments

Relationship	Hypothesis	Estimate	P-Value	Judgment
$X_1 \rightarrow Y_1$	H1	-0.09	0.13	Rejected
$X_2 \rightarrow Z_1$	H2	-0.44	0.01	Accepted
$X_1 \rightarrow Z_2$	H3	-0.32	0.01	Accepted
$Z_1 \rightarrow Y_1$	H4	0.34	0.01	Accepted
$Z_2 \rightarrow Y_1$	H5	0.30	0.01	Accepted
$X_1 \rightarrow Z_1 \rightarrow Y_1$	H6	0.34	0.01	Accepted
$X_1 \rightarrow Z_2 \rightarrow Y_1$	H7	0.31	0.01	Accepted

shows the estimated path coefficient of the direct effect of job stress on employee engagement ( $\beta=-0.09$ ;  $P<0.13$ ), **or H1 is rejected**. While the effect of job stress on affective commitment ( $\beta=-0.44$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), job stress on work discipline ( $\beta=-0.32$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), affective commitment on work engagement ( $\beta=0.34$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), work discipline on work engagement ( $\beta=0.30$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), the role of mediating affective commitment on the effect of job stress on work engagement ( $\beta=-3.83$ ;  $P<0.00$ ), the role of mediating discipline work on the effect of job stress on work engagement ( $\beta=-0.31$ ;  $P<0.01$ ) **or H2 to H7 accepted**.

## DISCUSSION

### The Direct Effect of Job Stress on Work Engagement

The results of testing the H1 hypothesis regarding the effect of job stress on work engagement are rejected. From these results it can be concluded that the level of job stress will not have a direct impact on the level of work engagement of Sugar Factory X employees. The results of hypothesis 1 testing in this research indicate that job stress does not have a significant direct effect on work engagement. The results of this research are not in line with the results of previous research by Garrosa et al., (2011). With the same engagement indicator

between this research and the research by Garrosa et al., (2011) namely indicators of dedication, vigor and absorption. However, the results of this research do not support the results of the research by Garrosa et al., (2011) which shows that role stress has a significant negative effect on nursing engagement. In addition, the results of this study also do not support the results of previous studies conducted by Karatepe et al. (2014), and Li et al. (2017); which generally shows that job stress has a significant effect on work engagement. On the other hand, the results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by Tagoe and Amponsah Tawiah (2019) and Karatepe et al. (2018) which shows that job stress does not have a significant impact on work involvement.

### The Direct Effect of Job Stress on Affective Commitment

The results of testing the H2 hypothesis regarding the effect of job stress on affective commitment are accepted. From these results it can be concluded that the level of job stress will directly impact the level of affective commitment of the employees of Sugar Factory X. The results of this study found that the effect of job stress on affective commitment was significantly negative. These results can be concluded that the higher the job stress felt by employees will have a direct impact on the low affective com-

mitment of employees. And vice versa, the lower the job stress felt by employees, the higher the affective commitment of employees will be. The results of hypothesis 2 testing in this study indicate that job stress has a significant direct effect on affective commitment. With different indicators from research by Ackfeldt and Malhotra (2012) but the results of this study support the research results which shows that the indicators of Role ambiguity and Role conflict as indicators of job stress have a significant negative effect on affective commitment. This study also supports the results of previous research conducted by Aghdasi, Kiâmanesh, and Ebrahim (2011), Brunetto et al. (2017), and Garg and Dhar (2014) which shows that job stress has a significant impact on affective commitment. But on the other hand, the results of this study are not in line with the results of previous studies conducted by Chênevert et al. (2013) and Solli Sæther (2011) which shows that role conflict which is an indicator of job stress does not have a significant effect on affective commitment,

### **The Direct Effect of Job Stress on Work Discipline**

The results of testing the H3 hypothesis regarding the effect of job stress on work discipline are accepted. From these results it can be concluded that the level of job stress will directly have an impact on the level of work discipline of Sugar Factory X employees. The results of this study found that the effect of job stress on work discipline is significantly negative. These results can be concluded that the higher the job stress felt by employees will have a direct impact on the low work discipline of employees. And vice versa, the lower the job stress felt by employees, the higher the work

discipline of employees. The results of hypothesis 3 testing in this study indicate that job stress has a significant direct effect on work discipline. The results of this study are in line with the results of previous research conducted by Hanan (2020) which shows that job stress has a significant positive effect on work discipline.

### **The Direct Effect of Affective Commitment on Work Engagement**

The results of testing the H4 hypothesis regarding the effect of affective commitment on attachment are accepted. From these results it can be concluded that the level of affective commitment will have a direct impact on the level of work engagement among employees at Sugar Factory X. The results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by Einwiller, Ruppel, and Stranzl (2021) who also examined the effect of affective commitment on employee engagement in the pandemic era with the same result, namely affective commitment had a significant effect on work engagement. The results of this study also support the results of other studies such as research by van Gelderen and Bik (2016), Ibrahim and Falasi (2014), and Kaur, Malhotra, and Sharma (2020) which shows that affective commitment shows a significant influence on employee engagement.

### **Direct Influence of Work Discipline on Work Engagement**

The results of testing the H5 hypothesis regarding the effect of work discipline on engagement are accepted. From these results it can be concluded that the high or low work discipline will have a direct impact on the high or low work

engagement of the employees of Sugar Factory X. The results of the analysis show a significant positive influence on the influence of work discipline on work engagement, it can be concluded that high work discipline by employees will also be followed by high work engagement for the employee concerned, or vice versa when employee work discipline decreases it will also be followed by decreased work engagement of employees of Sugar Factory X.

### **The Mediation Role Affective Commitment on the Effect of Job Stress on Work Engagement**

The results of testing the direct effect of job stress on work engagement show insignificant results or in other words job stress does not significantly influence work engagement. However, in this study it was found that job stress has a significant effect on affective commitment, and affective commitment has a direct effect on work engagement. The results of testing the role of mediating affective commitment in this study indicate that affective commitment mediates the influence of job stress on work engagement. If viewed from the indirect effect of job stress on work engagement through affective commitment, the testing was carried out using the Sobel test, indicating that affective commitment acts as a full mediation or fully mediates the effect of job stress on work engagement.

### **Mediation Role of Work Discipline on the Effect of Job Stress on Work Engagement**

The results of testing the direct effect of job stress on work engagement show insignificant results or in other words job stress does not significantly influence work engagement. However, in this study it was found that job stress has a significant effect on work discipline

and work discipline has a direct effect on work engagement. The results of testing the role of mediating affective commitment in this study indicate that work discipline mediates the influence of job stress on work engagement. If viewed from the indirect effect of job stress on work engagement through work discipline, the test is carried out using the Sobel test, indicating that work discipline acts as a full mediation or fully mediates the effect of job stress on work engagement.

The results of this study indicate that job stress does not have a significant direct effect on work engagement. However, affective commitment and work discipline act as full mediation on the effect of job stress on work engagement. That when low job stress is able to increase affective commitment, then work engagement also increases. In testing the direct effect, the results show that job stress has a direct effect on affective commitment and work discipline, while work discipline and affective commitment have a direct effect on work engagement. The meaning of the results of this study strengthens the existence of Social Exchange theory.

The results of this study support many previous studies related to job stress which do not have a significant effect on work engagement, namely research that has been conducted by Garrosa et al., (2011), Karatepe et al. (2014), Li et al. (2017); and which shows that job stress has a significant effect on job engagement. The results of this study also support the results of the research by Ackfeldt and Malhotra (2012), Aghdasi, Kiâmanesh, and Ebrahim (2011), Brunetto et al. (2017), and Garg and Dhar (2014) which shows that job stress has a significant impact on affective commitment.

The analysis in this research also shows that job stress has a significant effect on work

discipline. These results support the results of previous studies that have been conducted by Hanan (2020) which shows that job stress has a significant positive effect on work discipline. The results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by Einwiller, Ruppel, and Stranzl (2021), van Gelderen and Bik (2016), Ibrahim and Falasi (2014), Kaur, Malhotra, and Sharma (2020) that affective commitment shows a significant influence on employee engagement. Therefore, company managers paying attention to employee commitment and work discipline is a must, because of the important role of these two variables in an effort to build employee engagement.

The results of this study have provided several findings, but there are still a number of things that need to be studied in more depth regarding the variables and process of this research. The condition of the Covid-19 pandemic made it difficult to access direct communication with respondents, thus hampering the

data collection process. This research was conducted at a sugar factory in East Java, so it is necessary to conduct research on a wider object and area to strengthen the generalization of research findings.

Based on the results of the research that has been described previously, several suggestions can be put forward that are expected to be useful for further research. As for the advice given, considering that the mediating variable in this study is very important in influencing work engagement, it is hoped that the results of this study can be used as a reference for further researchers to develop this research by considering other variables such as compensation and work culture which are other variables outside the variables that have been included in this study. It is also recommended for future researchers to use indicators and other items that are not used in this study as measurements of the results of this study and are expected to provide better research results than this study.

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